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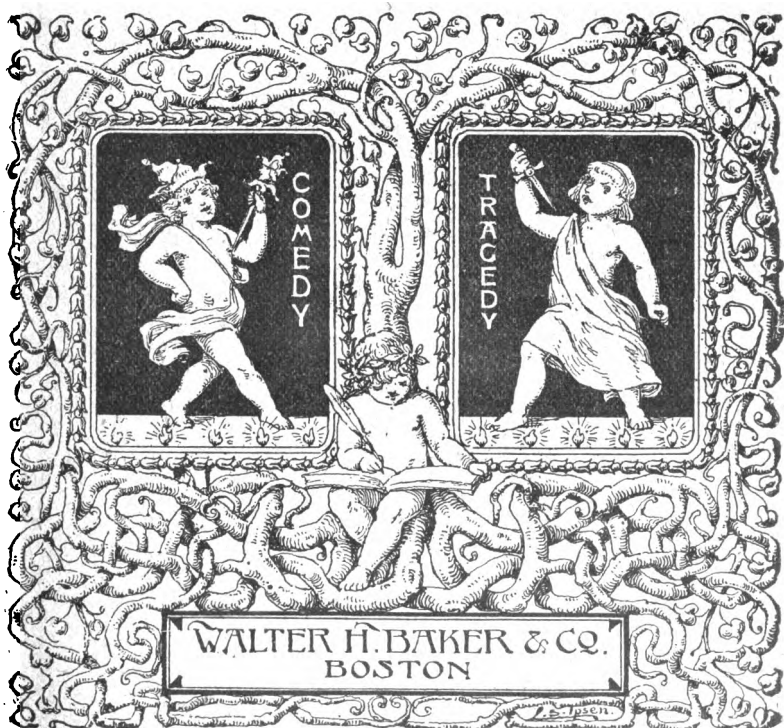
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FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.

CHARACTERS.

PROF. MARTIN GOLDWHINNEY.

DR. LEOPOLD NEWMAN, *his son-in-law.*

MR. CHAS. HARKINS.

JACK HARKINS, *his son, whose "nom de théâtre" is Emil Hawkins.*

SPARTAN SPURGIUS SPOTTS, *a theatrical manager, leading heavy, etc.*

MRS. GOLDWHINNEY.

MRS. NEWMAN, } *her daughters.*
PAULA, }

ROSA, *a maidservant.*

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FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.

ACT I.

SCENE. — *The PROFESSOR'S Study. Doors C. R. and L. At the back, L. C., an alcove with portière. In alcove, reclining chair and small table upon which are books; down stage, L., writing-table with books, manuscripts, and papers; down stage, R., a small work-table upon which are books, etc. Behind table, small sofa; bookcases about walls. Curtain raised, discovers ROSA sitting in chair reading paper.*

ROSA (*reads aloud*). "The most respectful undersigned takes the liberty of making the humble announcement to the citizens of the town, that on the 16th of September, there will be a theatrical performance in the town hall. (*Speaks.*) A play! My eyes! won't that be great! (*Reads.*) The undersigned management will do all in their power to surpass any previous performance ever given in the town. All stars. Ten supernumeraries. We are the only combination now on the road not exhibiting living pictures.

Most respectfully,

Your humble servant,

Spartan Spotts, Manager."

(*Speaks.*) As long as the missus stays at the Baths I can go every night to the theatre. If she were at home, I wouldn't get time. I couldn't get out even to see the posters, let alone the show.

(*Enter PROFESSOR GOLDWHINNEY, R.*)

PROFESSOR. What are you doing, Rosa?

ROSA (*rises*). O Professor! I only brought in the books from the third class in history. There are such queer things in them.

PROF. Yes, yes; but never mind them now. Help me off with my coat. (*ROSA helps him.*) Is there any mail for me?

ROSA. No, Professor.

PROF. Not a word from my wife since Monday. Can anything have happened?

ROSA. Don't you worry, Professor. The missus can take care of herself (*aside*) and everybody else.

PROF. Has any one called?

ROSA. Yes, sir. An hour ago a gentleman called.

PROF. Who was he? Did he leave any card?

ROSA. No, sir. He looked like a missionary — smooth face — and had a diamond shirt-stud as large as a strawberry.

PROF. Did he say that he would call again?

ROSA. Yes, in half an hour. (*Gives theatrical poster to PROFESSOR.*) Please sir, can I go?

PROF. What's this? The theatre to open? No, indeed. (*Aside.*) I will write my wife to prolong her stay.

(DR. NEWMAN *looks in at door*, R.)

DR. NEWMAN. Good-afternoon, Professor. My wife is outside. May she come in?

PROF. Oh, yes, if you think best.

(MARIANA *pushes by* DR. NEWMAN, *closing door upon him.*)

MARIANA. Papa, that wretch of a husband of mine is outside. Do you think it wise for him to come in?

PROF. Ha, ha! come in, both of you. You haven't been to see me for days.

(MARIANA *opens door*; DR. NEWMAN *enters.*)

MAR. I know it; but we are so happy, and you know that the doctor is away all day, so that when he comes home in the evening, why, we like to stay at home by the fire.

PROF. Oh! naturally.

DR. N. But you should come to see us. What do you do with yourself?

PROF. Oh, I get bored to death.

MAR. It is shameful of mamma and Paula to leave you so long. Is there any news from them?

PROF. Nothing since Monday.

DR. N. The Baths must be doing them good.

PROF. Yes, I hope so. (*Aside to MARIANA.*) And they are costing me a pile of money. So far, it has cost me five hundred dollars. That's a lot of money for me. Why, I have had to draw upon Paula's money in the bank. I must put that back before your mother returns or she will make it interesting for me. I might try a hand at stocks.

MAR. Oh, no, papa.

PROF. Well, lots of people do the stock market successfully.

MAR. Yes, and the stock market does the people quite as successfully.

PROF. But I must have some excitement. I have put my library in order three times, sorted my bills (*aside*), haven't paid any though (*aloud*), read over my manuscripts, and, children, what do you think? (*Takes manuscript from table.*) I found this.

DR. N. Why, that looks like lyric poetry.

PROF. Worse than that. It is a Roman tragedy.

MAR. Horrors!

PROF. You would get them if you read it.

DR. N. Something you have written?

PROF. (*bowing*). Yes; when I was a student. What student has not written a tragedy? Do you know that after reading it again I begin to think that it is not bad. To be sure, it is crude, but it has fire and youth. (*Pats it affectionately.*) Not so bad.

(*Enter ROSA.*)

PROF. Not so bad; is it Rosa?

ROSA. Oh, Professor, it is sublime.

PROF. There you are. She appreciates it. I have read it to her.

MAR. (*laughs*). Read it to Rosa! Ha, ha!

PROF. Laugh away. You don't appreciate the fact that an author must read his works to some one. So Rosa had to stand it.

DR. N. (*aside*). Poor Rosa.

ROSA. I listened so hard. Oh, Mrs. Newman, it is heavenly, but so sad, (*Bursts into tears.*)

PROF. There, there! Don't begin to howl again. (*To DR. NEWMAN.*) You can see the effect it had upon her. What might it not work upon an audience?

DR. N. Well, I should say a stampede.

ROSA. I can't help it. It makes me cry just to see the covers. It's like peeling onions. (*Exit crying.*)

PROF. Now you can see what I do to amuse myself. I read the products of my youthful brain to the domestic.

MAR. (*who has been reading a book, which she has taken from table*). Oh, heavens!

PROF. (*jumping up*). What is it?

DR. N. Are you ill?

MAR. (*comes down between them; holds out book to PROFESSOR*). Papa, can you trust the person who wrote that book?

PROF. (*looking at book*). Balzac. I should say so.

MAR. (*to DR. NEWMAN*). Then, sir, you are a despicable wretch.

DR. N. What — what do you mean, Mariana?

MAR. Read for yourself.

DR. N. (*reads*). "Every bride would, if she should learn of the former life of the bridegroom even upon her marriage day, draw back from the altar."

MAR. There! What was your former life?

DR. N. But, Mariana, this is nonsense.

MAR. Papa, what was his former life?

PROF. Ahem! Well, my child —

MAR. (*mimics them*). "But, Mariana," — "Well, my child." You think that you can hoodwink me, but you shall confess.

DR. N. But, my dear, I have nothing to confess.

MAR. How could Balzac have made such a statement if he had not had good authority?

DR. N. As I never met the gentleman, I don't know how he could. Come, don't be silly, dear.

MAR. (*angrily*). We shall see if you are so brave when we get home. You think that you have papa to protect you here. Good-by, papa.

PROF. But you are not going?

DR. N. Now, do listen.

MAR. If you please, we will discuss this affair in our own home. Come.

PROF. (*nudging him*). My, but you are in for it!

DR. N. (*aside*). Why in thunder don't you keep your Balzac out of sight?

PROF. (*to MARIANA*). Now, my dear, you are always talking about your domestic happiness, but when you come here you fight like a couple of English sparrows.

MAR. Oh, indeed! Of course you will take his part. (*Crying*.) If mamma were only here.

PROF. (*aside*). Thank heaven, she is not!

MAR. When she returns, I shall tell her all, and how you have treated me. (*Goes to door*.)

DR. N. There, dear, don't cry. I am coming with you.

MAR. (*sharply*). No, sir! That is not necessary. (*Exit C.*)

DR. N. (*sharply to PROFESSOR*). I suppose it is none of my business to criticise you, but if I had a daughter, I would bring her up differently. My son-in-law should not be subjected to curtain lectures every five minutes. Good-morning, sir. (*Exit C., slamming door*.)

PROF. This shall be a warning; Balzac must be put away. Heavens, if it should fall into my wife's hands. My! but there would be a storm brewing about here with a side order of cyclone for me. (*Exit L., with books*.)

(*Enter R., ROSA and SPARTAN SPOTTS.*)

ROSA. This way, if you please, sir. The Professor knows that you have called.

SPARTAN SPOTTS. So? Capital! Accept my most humble thanks for your attention.

ROSA. I will tell him that you are here, sir.

SPOTTS. Nay, stay but a moment, if you please. (*Takes off coat; strikes attitude. In dramatic tone.*) Bring forth the bob-tail lion!

ROSA. Sir!

SPOTTS. I beg your pardon. That was a "lapsus linguæ." Kindly tell the Professor that Spartan Spotts, theatrical manager, leading heavy and first old man, awaits his pleasure.

ROSA. Great heavens! You are an actor.

SPOTTS. Aye, the very same. You seem astonished. At present I am presenting my compliments to all the notabilities in the town. Tell me, fair maid, doth the Professor hie himself to the theatre many times?

ROSA. Goodness! To the theatre? Since I have been here no one has been allowed to mention it.

SPOTTS. Ah, say not so? And how many moons have you been here?

ROSA. Ten years since Christmas.

SPOTTS. And not in the firm. By the shades of Julius Cæsar, how happens this?

ROSA. The mistress does not approve of the theatre.

SPOTTS. But the Professor. Has he no taste for the drama?

ROSA. Well, I should say that he had. He has written a play.

SPOTTS. So!

ROSA. It is there on the table. It is a play that is a play. Something about ancient history.

SPOTTS. Ye gods! But it doth amaze me. Look you, hath it ever been read to the "oi polloi"?

ROSA. What may that be, sir?

SPOTTS. The people; the common herd.

ROSA. No; I am the only one that knows of it.

SPOTTS. By heavens! But this is nuts for me.

ROSA. What?

SPOTTS. Listen. The Professor is one of the leading men in town?

ROSA. Of course. When he goes along the street all the people salute him.

SPOTTS. So, so! 'Tis well, 'tis well. (*Clasps hands.*)

ROSA. What is the matter with you? Are you in pain?

SPOTTS. Nay, nay; I have an idea.

ROSA. I will call the Professor.

SPOTTS. That is well; do so. (*ROSA exits.*) Spotts, my boy, here is your chance. There was that piece we played in last year that the society leader wrote. Jupiter, but it was rotten! But we packed the theatre, standing room only. If the town knows that the Professor has written a play, every one will go to see it. And they shall see it. Let me see. There are about three thousand inhabitants, and half will go. Spotts, my boy, there is money in it. Ah, he comes!

(*Enter PROFESSOR.*)

PROF. You wished to speak with me, sir?

SPOTTS. I am Spotts, Spartan Spotts, sometimes called Spotty; but that is neither here nor there. I would a word with thee.

PROF. How can I serve you?

SPOTTS. Sir, I beg your pardon for thus intruding upon your "sanctum sanctotum," but I wished to introduce myself to one of

your well known culture and literary attainments. I am at present canvassing the district. I mean that I am engaged in inviting the most prominent personages of the town to be present at my opening performance, when I shall produce "The Gladiator." They have all promised to attend. Let me see. There is the judge — and — and I said the judge, did I not? Yes, he will certainly be there; and besides the judge there are five front seats with opera-glass attachments reserved for the Professor and his worthy family.

PROF. I am very sorry, but we never go to the theatre.

SPOTTS. Ah! but, my dear professor, you will make an exception in my case, and you will be well paid. Oh, our performance is spoken of most highly; it goes along with the rhythmic flow of goosegrease.

PROF. Ah, indeed! it must be wonderful!

SPOTTS. Wonderful! remarkable! Especially by my wife and myself. We could draw tears from a stone wall; and for my company — all stars. My wife's wardrobe is magnificent; made in Paris. My first lover is sprung from blue-black blood, and then our infant prodigy, though only eighteen years of age, is a marvel. You must see her.

PROF. Yes; I should like to.

SPOTTS. Now, my dear Professor, I make a specialty of introducing young talent, especially young playwrights. Many pieces now played throughout the civilized globe were first produced by me. It is but two months ago that a young society leader brought me his first effort.

PROF. (*interested*). And you produced it?

SPOTTS. Yes, to packed houses. "Standing room only." The author has made barrels of money, and is at work upon his second piece.

PROF. "A barrel of money!" Is it possible?

SPOTTS. Aye! the very same. (*Rises.*) But, Professor, I will not detain you.

PROF. No, no, don't go. I have a friend who has written a play —

SPOTTS. So! (*Aside.*) He nibbles — a harder bite, and I will land him.

PROF. A very funny coincidence, but I happen to have the manuscript here; it is a Roman tragedy.

SPOTTS. By the gods, Professor! Just the thing for my company. We are divine in Roman tragedies. Permit me to have a look at it.

PROF. But I really don't know as I ought —

SPOTTS. You may trust me; I am most circumspect. At least tell me the name of it.

PROF. "King Titus Tatius."

SPOTTS. Ah! that is a beautiful title, very catchy. Everything in a name, you know.

PROF. Do you really think it a good one?

SPOTTS. No doubt about it. I can see it now on the posters. "King Titus Tatius." It will attract, and I can see the judge sitting in the crowded orchestra. You really must let me read it, Professor.

PROF. But I cannot let it go out of my hands, as it does not belong to me.

SPOTTS. Then with your kind permission I will read it here.

PROF. But—

SPOTTS. You cannot certainly object to my sitting quietly in a corner. In half an hour I shall have read it through.

(*Enter ROSA, C.*)

ROSA. There is a gentleman to see you, sir—Mr. Harkins.

PROF. I know no one by that name. What does he want?

ROSA. He says that he is an old friend of the Professor's.

PROF. Did you say that I was at home?

ROSA. Yes, sir.

PROF. Well then, tell him to come in. (*To SPOTTS.*) My dear Mr. Spotts, step into my sitting-room. You can take the manuscript and read it there.

SPOTTS. Certainly, Professor. Do not make company of me. I shall make myself quite at home. (*Goes, L.; aside.*) This piece shall be given even though it be worse than the society leader's. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter MR. HARKINS.*)

MR. HARKINS. Good-morning, Professor. I am in a great hurry, but I could not leave town without seeing my dear friend.

PROF. (*aside*). Who the devil is he? I never saw him before.

MR. H. You don't mean to say that you don't remember me?

PROF. Certainly, certainly. You will pardon me if I seem a bit confused. I now frankly confess—

MR. H. I really believe that you do not know me.

PROF. Well, to be quite frank—

MR. H. I am a lawyer, Mr. Charles Harkins.

PROF. Oh, yes! Ha, ha! (*Aside.*) No idea who he is.

MR. H. Two years ago when we were in New York we sat together at the theatre.

PROF. Right in the Empire Theatre?

MR. H. Excuse me, it was at Koster & Bial's. Don't you remember the skirt-dancing?

PROF. Oh, now I remember. Pardon me for not having located you at once.

MR. H. You told me to be sure and look you up when I came to town. So here I am; but if I am disturbing you, I will take my departure.

PROF. (*detaining him*). No, no, sit down. I am only sorry that my wife and daughter are not at home.

MR. H. You mean your daughter Mariana?

PROF. No, Paula.

MR. H. The younger one. I remember. You said that the elder was a bit quick-tempered, Is she cured of that?

PROF. Yes, thank you. She is married now. (*Aside.*) What a confidant I must have made of him.

MR. H. Is she married happily?

PROF. Yes, indeed; they are as happy as doves.

MR. H. (*strikes table*). But there will be trouble. Mark my words. I shall not be the only unhappy parent in the world.

PROF. You have had trouble with your children?

MR. H. Why, Professor, you speak as though I had not told you the whole story.

PROF. Oh, yes, I remember, your daughter.

MR. H. "Daughter!" I have no daughter. It is my son Jack. He has behaved just as I told you he would. Would not study; ran after chorus girls; absconded—

PROF. But, my dear sir, boys will be boys.

MR. H. (*strikes table*). What! You dare to take his part? But you shall hear the whole story again from A to Z.

PROF. (*aside*). Good Lord!

SPOTTS (*looks out of door, L.*). Wonderful! Superb! Gorgeous!

MR. H. (*jumping up*). What in thunder was that?

SPOTTS. Excuse me, Professor, but I could not contain myself any longer.

PROF. You have read it already?

SPOTTS. Yes; the first act. It is a magnificent portrayal of the human passions. But the lines, the language. Ah! the language.

PROF. You really think that it can be produced?

SPOTTS. Professor, you could not do the public greater injustice than by keeping such a play locked up in your desk. Such a play belongs to the stage. My stage!

MR. H. (*with impatience*). Oh, well, if you have business of greater importance, I will leave you.

PROF. No, sir, I will be with you in a moment. (*To SPOTTS.*) Read the other acts; they are still better.

SPOTTS. That is impossible. No, no, nothing could be finer. (*Going L.; aside.*) I have him. He's mine, he's mine. (*Exit.*)

PROF. Now, Mr. Harkins, proceed, I pray you.

MR. H. How much of this story did I tell you at the theatre?

PROF. My dear sir, I must confess that I have had so much on my mind of late—

MR. H. Well, I shall be obliged to tell you the whole story over again.

PROF. (*aside*). What have I done!

MR. H. To make a long story short, my wife was twenty-eight years old when I married her. We had three children. The younger—

(SPOTTS enters, L.)

SPOTTS. Gentlemen, I implore your pardon, but I should like very much to ask one question.

PROF. Well, what is it?

SPOTTS. Is there a military organization in town, or a fire company, or temperance band?

PROF. Why do you ask?

SPOTTS (*confidentially*). You see, at the end of the second act there is a great procession of priests, for which we shall need at least six or eight supernumeraries.

PROF. "Supernumeraries?"

SPOTTS. Yes; they are expensive, but we must have them.

MR. H. Professor, I shall soon be out of patience with all this interruption.

PROF. But, my dear sir, I am at present very much engaged with a new instructor in classics.

MR. H. Do you think that my time is nothing? I must leave town in the half-past seven express.

PROF. Ah! what a pity. But you will come again?

MR. H. Yes, on my return; but do not forget what I have already told you or I shall be obliged to begin all over again.

PROF. (*aside*). Heaven forbid!

MR. H. Do not mention this affair to your wife, as I wish to keep it a secret. (*Exit.*)

PROF. (*calls*). Rosa, Rosa!

(*Enter Rosa.*)

PROF. If that gentleman who has just left calls again, you will tell him that I have gone away. That I am on an expedition to the North Pole and can't be disturbed.

ROSA. Very well, Professor. (*Exit.*)

SPOTTS. I will wager that the end of the first act will bring the audience to their feet (*aside*) in their haste to get out. (*Aloud.*) Mark you the tableau. In the foreground a few Romans hold a distracted Sabine by the arms, while in the middle stands King Titus Tatius. The moonlight streaming full in his face, — that reminds me that our moon will have to be enlarged, it's a quarter moon, — while he shakes his fist in the face of heaven with a mighty curse. Professor, I'll bet you a cold bottle of Apollinaris that the people will go away exclaiming, "Nothing like that has been seen on our stage."

PROF. Yes, that sounds very well; but who knows how it will look on the stage?

SPOTTS. That, sir, I can tell by experience when I read a piece. It all appears just as I would see it were it performed.

PROF. Well, then, my dear manager, I will be candid with you. The play is not by a friend; I wrote it.

SPOTTS. I knew that already, Professor. I could see it in your eye.

PROF. (*goes to glass*). Which one? You must see that a production of this play while I am an instructor in this town is impossible.

SPOTTS. But your name need not appear upon the bills.

PROF. But the fact that I am the author will be sure to leak out. No; I cannot think of such a thing.

SPOTTS. Every one in my company shall be sworn to secrecy. My wife will look out for that.

PROF. Wife! (*Aside*.) The devil! What would mine say if she should learn? (*Aloud*.) No; you must put the idea out of your head. It is impossible.

SPOTTS. But, Professor, you would not deprive a struggling artist of the opportunity of a lifetime. Think, too, of the money you will make. Once produced, you will have money to burn.

PROF. (*hesitates*). But if it should not be a success?

SPOTTS. Ah! but with this play there can be no question of failure; and then, after the last rehearsal you can come to me and say, "Spotts, the play is no good. Give it back to me."

PROF. Well, if you will leave me that loophole of escape, and promise the utmost secrecy, I might perhaps decide—

SPOTTS. No; you have done that already. Shake hands upon the success of your play. (*They shake hands*.) I shall give it for my first night.

PROF. That will be in a week?

SPOTTS (*putting on coat*). Yes; on the sixteenth.

PROF. That will be agreeable to me. (*Aside*.) If only my wife will stay away until after the play. (*Aloud*.) But could you prepare it in so short a time?

SPOTTS. Oh, don't worry about that. We have played other pieces. This is not our first attempt. I will tell you this much now. I shall play King Titus Tatius myself. Kings are my specialty; and my wife will play Virginia. Ah! but she will please you. She is the personification of the Roman maiden.

PROF. Indeed!

SPOTTS. By the way (*takes pictures from pocket*), here are some of her pictures. Here she is as "Leah"; this one "Mary Queen of Scots"; and this one, her *pièce de résistance*, "Queen of the Amazons"—permit me to leave you this one as a souvenir. (*Places picture on table, facing audience*.) And now I must depart. Our compact holds, does it not?

PROF. Yes; but about your wife. Virginia is a young part.

SPOTTS. That makes no difference; my wife is most versatile. The critics speak of her as the chameleon. Ah! I can see her before me now at the end of the second act. She rushes to the knee of King Romulus and cries, "In the day of my unhappiness my faith remains. You can take from me my life, but not my honor." Sir, I wish you good-morning. (*Exit*.)

PROF. If the thing is only kept secret, all's well. If not, I shall wish that I had never seen Mr. Spartan Spotts.

(Enter ROSA hurriedly.)

ROSA. Oh, Professor! he has taken away our play.

PROF. Who?

ROSA. The manager. I saw it in his hand.

PROF. Nonsense! That was a pathfinder.

ROSA. No; it was our play. I saw the coffee spot in the cover. Oh, I know our play is going to be given in a real theatre by real actors. Hurrah!

PROF. Hush! don't tell the whole town about it.

ROSA (*whispers*). Is it a secret?

PROF. Well, I should say that it was. Understand, you are not to breathe a syllable of this to any one. Least of all to my wife, should she happen to come home earlier than we expected. (*Aside.*) I will write her to prolong her stay for a fortnight. (*Sits himself at table.*)

ROSA. No; when the missus comes back there will be no more play. Do you remember, Professor, how you read it to me evenings, till the tears rolled down? And then I dreamed of it all night. Oh, it was beautiful!

PROF. (*writing at table*). If I could only think of a good excuse to keep my wife away. Ah! I have it. (*Writes.*)

ROSA. When our play is acted I must go to the theatre; and if the missus will not let me go I shall take French leave, even if I gets notice the next day; for I can comfort myself with the beautiful lines in the play. "And even if thy wrath bursts upon me in its fury, you can but break my heart."

PROF. (*finishes writing, and gives card to ROSA*). Here, Rosa, post this card at once. I will change my coat and go over to the theatre. (*Going out, R.*) I must see how the stage looks. (*Exit.*)

ROSA (*reads card*). "Dear Sophronia, — I am sitting alone at my desk with a cup of tea" —

(Enter MRS. GOLDWHINNEY and PAULA with wraps and bags.)

MRS. G. Rosa, what are you doing there?

ROSA. It is only a postal card from the Professor to you. (*Aside.*) Heavens! The missus and Miss Paula.

MRS. G. And you were reading it? Give it to me. (*Takes card.*)

ROSA. But you came so unexpectedly. (*Aside.*) What will the Professor say now.

PAULA (*coming down*). Where is papa?

ROSA. He was going out to the theatre.

MRS. G. To the theatre!

ROSA. Yes; he goes every night to hear the music.

MRS. G. Indeed! You may bring our luggage up at once. (*Takes off wrap.*)

ROSA. Very well, madam. (*Exit.*)

PAULA. I will go and tell papa that we have come.

MRS. G. No, stay where you are. We will give him a surprise.

PAULA. Won't he be surprised — when he had just written us?

MRS. G. (*reads card*). "My dear Sophronia. I am sitting alone at my desk, with a cup of tea. It is half-past eight."

PAULA. Why, it is half-past nine now.

MRS. G. "Before me, on the desk, stands your picture."

PAULA (*finds picture left by SPOTTS*). Oh! (*Laughs.*)

MRS. G. What is the matter with you?

PAULA. Oh, nothing.

MRS. G. "The pretty flowers which you picked for me are standing in a glass of water on my table."

PAULA. Why, here they are, mamma, in the coal-hod.

MRS. G. (*aside*). Ah! how he lies. (*Reads*). "I long to see you; but in spite of that it would be better for you and Pauline to remain at the Baths a while longer. We have no servant in the house."

PAULA. What!

MRS. G. (*reads*). "Rosa has just gone away to attend the funeral of some relation. She departed last evening in great sorrow."

PAULA. How could papa write such a falsehood?

MRS. G. Oh, it is horrible! (*Sinks into chair.*)

(*Enter PROFESSOR.*)

PROF. (*outside*). "Count that day lost, whose low descending sun looks on thy work, and finds no worthy action done." (*Enters C.; sees MRS. G. and PAULA; aside.*) Good heavens! My wife! (*With great effusion.*) My dear Sophronia! My little Paula! What a charming surprise! I have been so lonesome. I have just sent a postal card to you, begging you to return at once.

MRS. G. I have already seen your card.

PROF. (*aside*). The devil! (*Aloud.*) Well, my dear, the fact is —

MRS. G. No excuse, sir. I shall not listen to you. (*Exit L.*)

PAULA. And mamma has not seen the worst. I found this on your desk. This picture. (*Holds out picture.*)

PROF. Merciful heavens! The Queen of the Amazons.

PAULA (*shaking finger at PROFESSOR*). Oh, papa!

(PROFESSOR *sinks into chair, covers face with handkerchief. Quick curtain.*)

ACT II.

SCENE.— *The same as Act I. DR. NEWMAN is writing at table or desk. ROSA enters bringing card which she hands to NEWMAN.*

ROSA. There is a gentleman to see you, sir.

DR. N. (*takes card and reads*). Emil Hawkins, actor. (*Shakes head.*) I don't know any actor.

ROSA. He wrote something on the back of the card, sir.

DR. N. Ah, here it is. (*Reads.*) "Behind the *nomme de théâtre* of Emil Hawkins are the remains of your old classmate, Jack Harkins." Jack, by all that's wonderful! Ask him up, Rosa, at once. (*Continues reading.*) "Who, remembering the old days, asks a few moments of your time, while he a tale unfolds,"

(JACK enters c.)

DR. N. (*going up to him*). Jack, old man, how are you?

JACK. Able to be about and take a little nourishment, thank you. At present I am leading juvenile, first walking gentleman, property man, first tenor, and advance agent in the company of Spartan Spotts.

DR. N. How does this happen?

JACK. Oh, there is always an opportunity for a chap to make a fool of himself. The fact is, it's about the only opportunity open to a man any time. Well, a combination of love and jackassness brought me to this. You know, I was engaged to the daughter of our rector. We exchanged letters, held hands, and, yes — exchanged a few kisses.

DR. N. Yes; you had reached that stage of the game when I left college.

JACK. And I got no farther. One day I was given a twenty-four-hour notice to quit the premises I inhabited in her heart, and at the same time a young clergyman prepared to move in. Evidently the new tenant was let in for keeps, for they were soon married.

DR. N. And you?

JACK. Oh, I became engaged to a skirt-dancer out of revenge.

DR. N. You're the same old chap, Jack — one love affair after another. If my wife thinks my past is anything like yours, I don't wonder she keeps at me to tell her of my youthful escapades.

JACK. Look here, old man. I'm in a devil of a mess, and I want you to help me. That this is no fairy-tale I am about to unfold, I will show you plenty of proofs of its seriousness. (*Takes out a picture from pocketbook.*) Behold, exhibit A. Her picture!

DR. N. (*takes picture*). Go on.

JACK. She has blue eyes and raven locks. Exhibit B, lock of raven hair. (*Takes lock of hair out of book.*)

DR. N. Well, this is interesting.

JACK. We became acquainted one evening in summer, and as a proof of her undying love, she sent me a rose. Exhibit C, the rose. (*Takes out a rose from book.*)

DR. N. Ah, how touching!

JACK. When we exchanged the first kiss, I gave her, as a souvenir of the occasion, a ring. Exhibit D, the ring. (*Showing ring, and polishing it on sleeve of coat.*)

DR. N. But you took this back?

JACK. Yes; I was hard up one day and borrowed it to show it to my uncle. But here is the climax of my romance. Exhibit E, this bundle of bills.

DR. N. Unpaid?

JACK. The governor stopped my allowance; my creditors pushed me so hard that she, learning that my money had taken wings, wrote me that we must part. Well, the rest of the story you may surmise. I pawned my watch and took to the stage as a profession, where I soon learned that I had no more talent than a cat. I'm sick to death of the business. If the governor would only give me another trial, I'd stick to him like a plaster. He sends all my letters back unopened. Now, the governor always thought the sun rose and set in you; you were always such a grind and so steady, and if you would only write to him —

DR. N. Why certainly, old man. I'll write him at once. I'll enclose all the exhibits in a soothing epistle to which you can add a postscript. (*Puts exhibits in drawer with pocketbook. Both rising.*)

JACK. Thanks awfully, old man. I'll write my little postscript and give it to you to-day to enclose in your letter.

(*Enter MARIANA in walking-suit.*)

DR. N. Here is my wife. Mariana, I want to present to you my old chum, Jack Harkins.

JACK (*bowing*). I'm very pleased to meet you.

MAR. I am always glad to meet my husband's old friends. Leopold, will you please take the last number of Harper's to mamma?

DR. N. Certainly. Au revoir, Jack.

MAR. (*aside*). Now I shall learn the truth. You must come and see us very often at our home, Mr. Harkins. My husband so enjoys talking over the old college days. He has told me about some of your larks. Of course you know as well as I do that Leopold was just a bit wild.

JACK (*aside*). Wild! The greatest grind in the class.

MAR. Of course you had a hand in all his little larks?

JACK. Yes, ah — a good many, only when it became too hot for me.

MAR. Then he has not exaggerated when he told me that he was called at college "Le Diable."

JACK. Exaggerated, far from it. Why, his doings would fill two volumes, and make pretty spicy reading too.

MAR. (*joyfully*). Oh, how glad I am. Thank you so much for being so frank with me. You will come and see us again soon? (*Gives hand.*)

JACK. I should be more than pleased to do so, Mrs. Newman. (*Exit, going c.*) There's a happy woman!

MAR. So I have the truth now, and I will make him confess.

DR. N. (*calling from L.*). Mariana!

(DR. NEWMAN *enters*, c.)

DR. N. Here is the magazine. I will take it to your mother.

MAR. (*snatches book from NEWMAN*). So, sir, you are not aware that I sent you on this errand that I might learn all about your past.

DR. N. (*reproachfully*). Mariana!

MAR. Well, if you will not confide in me, why I must resort to other methods to learn your past.

DR. N. Are you still harping on that question? Why, I have heard nothing else for four days.

MAR. Oh, Leopold, you do not understand me. I want to be your confidante, to know all your inmost thoughts. I shall not be jealous of your past. I have hidden nothing from you.

DR. N. But, my dear, how can I confide a secret of the past to you, if I have none.

MAR. But, my dearest Leopold, I have watched you when you were alone and you looked so thoughtful, as if something was troubling you. Come now, confess, that's a dear, and you will find me a strong and true friend to comfort you. Please! Please!

DR. N. Mariana, will you promise me that you will never mention this subject again?

MAR. I promise you solemnly.

DR. N. Well, then, I will tell you the story. But, Mariana, you will forgive me?

MAR. Yes, yes, go on!

DR. N. Then listen. (*Takes portfolio from desk.*) When I was a student at Heidelberg, I went to the theatre every night, where I became acquainted with a famous dancer. Here is her picture. (*Hands photograph to MARIANA.*)

MAR. And you loved her?

DR. N. (*sighing*). With all my heart. She sent me a rose, — this one (*shows rose*), — and I, blinded with love, asked her for a lock of her hair — here it is. (*Shows hair.*)

MAR. You are an angel to tell me this, Leopold. (*Kisses him.*)

DR. N. That is not all. In my delirium I gave her a ring which I took away again. Here it is. (*Shows ring.*)

MAR. How generous you were with her.

DR. N. Yes, that's the trouble.

MAR. Ah, you got into debt?

DR. N. Alas, yes. Here are the bills (*shows bills*) — all unpaid. I was obliged to pawn my gold watch. Here is the ticket. (*Shows ticket.*)

MAR. Why, this must have taken place over two years ago. Does it never trouble you?

DR. N. Yes, at times it worries me greatly; but you have not heard all.

MAR. Tell me the rest.

DR. N. Have you not heard enough?

MAR. But how did it all end?

DR. N. She went into a convent.

MAR. Had she no relatives?

DR. N. Yes, she had an uncle; and he called me to account, demanded damages for the wounded affections of his niece, wanted a duel, and all that sort of thing.

MAR. And you have kept all this to yourself, bearing it alone. Leopold, you are a brave man, and I love you. (*Embraces him.*)

PAULA (*enters c.*). Ha, ha! Look quick, mamma. What a picture. Domestic happiness.

DR. N. (*to MARIANA*). Not a word of this to your mother.

MAR. Not a word. (*To mother.*) Oh, mamma, I have something to tell you. Come into the sitting-room. (*To PAULA.*) You look ten years younger since your return from the springs. (*Aside.*) Keep Leopold here, I must talk with mamma.

PAULA. All right.

MRS. G. Mariana, how does your parrot get along?

MAR. Finely, he can say several things.

DR. N. At present his favorite remark is "Give me a kiss, birdie."

MAR. You must come and hear him, mamma.

DR. N. (*anxiously*). Yes, let's all go and hear him.

(*Exeunt MARIANA and MRS. GOLDWHINNEY R.; NEWMAN attempts to follow, but is detained by PAULA.*)

PAULA. Wait a moment, Leopold, please, I want to ask you something.

DR. N. Oh, some other time. (*Tries to get away.*)

PAULA. But it is very important.

DR. N. Well, then, be quick, what is it?

PAULA. Since we came back to town, I have had such queer attacks —

DR. N. Indeed! (*Looking at door L.; aside.*) I'll bet Mariana is in there telling her mother the whole story.

PAULA. But you are not listening to me, Doctor.

DR. N. (*still looking at door*). Oh, yes, I am.

PAULA. Feel my pulse. (*Holds out hand.*) Is there anything serious the matter? After I have had my coffee in the morning —

DR. N. Yes, go on.

PAULA. I do not feel badly then, but after breakfast I go for a walk.

DR. N. Well, if that does not agree with you, stay at home.

PAULA. But the walk does me good.

DR. N. Well, all right. (*Attempts to leave her.*)

PAULA (*holding him*). Yesterday when I was in the garden I wanted to cut a rose—

DR. N. A rose! Exhibit C! Let me go; I must see my wife.

PAULA (*still holding him*). I suddenly became dizzy, my heart began to palpitate, everything began to go round. I thought I was going to faint.

DR. N. Ah, fainting-spell. I will get you something that will make that right. (*Tears himself away from PAULA; exit, C.*)

PAULA. No, no, don't go. There, it is coming on again. Ah, ah, ah. (*Sinks into chair, pretending to faint; a short pause, then looks about; seeing no one, jumps up.*) Oh, dear, he has really escaped. Well, I did my best. (*Hears noise outside.*) Oh, no, he is coming back. I must faint again. (*Writhes in chair and groans.*)

JACK (*enters, C., with letter in hand*). Well, I didn't take long to write that. (*Sees PAULA.*) What's this? Young lady in a faint. Where's the water? Ah, this will do. (*Finds cologne-sprinkler on table. Sprinkles PAULA's face with it.*)

PAULA (*beginning to show signs of life; sighs*). Ah! That is good. I feel better now, thank you so much.

JACK (*continues sprinkling; aside*). By jove! isn't she a beauty?

PAULA (*faintly*). Water! Sprinkle a little water on my head.

JACK (*rushes about room*). Where in thunder is the water? Ah! here it is. (*Wets his handkerchief, bathes PAULA's head.*)

PAULA. That is so refreshing. Thank you, that will do.

JACK. You are feeling better?

PAULA (*jumps up*). Heavens! A strange man.

JACK. I beg pardon, miss, but I saw that you were ill and needed assistance.

PAULA (*embarrassed*). Thank you very much, but I thought that you were my brother-in-law.

JACK. I consider myself fortunate to have happened here at the right moment; especially as my knowledge of medicine—

PAULA. You are a physician?

JACK. Not exactly, but I studied medicine with my friend Newman. My name is John Harkins.

PAULA. Dr. Newman is my brother-in-law.

JACK. Ah, then I have the honor of addressing Miss Goldwhinney, daughter of Professor—

PAULA. Yes; but please do not tell papa that I fainted.

JACK (*laughing*). I saw in a moment that you were trying to hoodwink some one.

PAULA. Sir!

JACK. Now, you know that you did not intend to faint.

PAULA. I wish you to understand that I am subject to these attacks.

JACK (*aside*). She lies like an angel.

PAULA. Try my pulse. You will find that it is not normal.

JACK (*feels pulse*). Certainly. Heavens! It is very high. (*Aside*.) I can scarcely feel it. (*Aloud*.) Miss Goldwhinney, before the attack did you have buzzing in your ears, flashes before the eyes, humming in the head, one foot as cold as ice, the other burning hot?

PAULA. Those are just my symptoms. What would you advise?

JACK. You wish me to answer you honestly?

PAULA. Certainly, I am prepared for the worst.

JACK (*laughing*). Miss Goldwhinney, I advise you to feign some other illness. Such a combination of symptoms was never known to exist except in the imagination.

PAULA (*with sarcasm*). Evidently your studies were never completed. It takes a man of experience to make a diagnosis of an illness like mine.

JACK. No doubt you are right. I have always regretted that I forsook medicine to tread the boards.

PAULA (*surprised*). You are an actor?

JACK. I have always dwelt under that illusion. I assume the rôle of Marcus in your father's play.

PAULA. Papa written a play!

JACK (*aside*). Confound it! I've let the cat out of the bag.

PAULA. Oh, do tell me. Is it to be given here in town?

JACK. Pardon me, Miss Goldwhinney, but I cannot reveal the true facts.

PAULA (*aside*). A secret.

JACK. The play is not by your father. It is one that he had — that is —

PAULA. I know all about it. (*Aside*.) Now I will lay a trap for him. (*Aloud*.) You mean the play which papa found in the library.

JACK. Yes, that's the one.

PAULA. The plot is the persecution of the Christians under Numa Pompilius.

JACK. Yes.

PAULA (*laughs*). The next time you wish to deceive a professor's daughter, be careful about dates, for Numa Pompilius died seven hundred years before Christ was born.

JACK. Gad! Right in the neck.

PAULA. We are quits.

JACK. Well, I am slow. Seven hundred years behind the times.

PAULA. That comes from not having completed your course.

(PROFESSOR *enters*, C.)

JACK. Great Scott! The Professor!

PROF. You here, Hawkins?

JACK. Yes; you see I have a message for Dr. Newman; if you will excuse me, I will take it to him. (*Exit, R.*)

PAULA. Papa, I think it is very mean of you to keep a secret from me.

PROF. Why, what do you mean, my dear?

PAULA. Oh, you need not appear so innocent, for I know all about it; you have written a play which is to be produced here.

PROF. For heaven's sake, child, not so loud! Your mother might hear; and you know she has not spoken to me for four days.

PAULA. But remember, papa, how she found out your deception on her return.

PROF. Has she mentioned it to you?

PAULA. Not a word.

PROF. That is just like her. She won't say a word till you least expect it, then she bursts forth like a thunder-cloud. My dear, do me a favor, and leave me alone with her as little as possible.

PAULA. Papa, is "Marcus" in your play a good part?

PROF. "Marcus?" A very good part; he has a fine speech in the second act. In the third he kills himself.

PAULA. And doesn't he appear again?

PROF. No; not after he has killed himself.

PAULA. Oh, what a pity!

PROF. Yesterday I slid in to the rehearsal for the first time.

PAULA. Were you pleased with it?

PROF. My child, I was so nervous and excited that I could hear or see nothing.

PAULA. You must be very anxious.

PROF. Anxious! I don't sleep any nights; I have hot and cold chills at the same time. The mere thought of its being a failure makes me tremble like a leaf.

PAULA. Tell me, papa, if "Marcus" —

PROF. Hush! Here is your mother. (*Enter MRS. GOLDWHINNEY, C.*) Ah, my dear Sophronia, I was just going to ask you to go for a walk.

MRS. G. (*coldly*). Thank you; Paula, go to Mariana's room. (*PROFESSOR makes signs to PAULA not to leave him.*)

PAULA. But, mamma, can't I stay with papa? I have not seen him for so long.

PROF. And I have so many things to tell her.

MRS. G. You must go for a few minutes; I wish to speak to your father alone.

PAULA (*going*). Poor papa. (*Exit, L.*)

PROF. (*aside*). Here it comes.

MRS. G. Martin, you are doubtless aware that I have some explanations to ask of you.

PROF. Yes, my dear, I am ready at any time —

MRS. G. No; I have decided to do without them, as I have no doubt you have spent the last four days in manufacturing a fine line of lies.

PROF. But, my dear Sophronia —

MRS. G. I wish to consult you on a very different matter. I need one hundred and fifty dollars, and I must have it at once.

PROF. One hundred and fifty dollars! May I ask what for?

MRS. G. No; I have asked no explanations of you. It is a very serious matter, and I must have the money.

PROF. But where am I to get it?

MRS. G. Why, out of the bank, to be sure.

PROF. (*aside*). Now I am in for it. (*Taking out pocketbook.*) I received my salary in advance this month. (*Takes out bank-note; tears bill in his embarrassment.*)

MRS. G. That will do; let me have it at once.

PROF. But, Sophronia —

MRS. G. Not a word, or I shall demand an explanation of your conduct during my absence.

PROF. There goes my last cent; but anything to keep peace in the family.

(*Enter DR. NEWMAN and MARIANA.*)

DR. N. Ah, good-afternoon, Professor. Hallo! what's the trouble? You look a bit disturbed. Anything the matter? (*Feels PROFESSOR's pulse; PROFESSOR and DR. NEWMAN talk up L.*)

MRS. G. (*takes MARIANA down R., giving her the pocketbook and bills*). Not a word. Here are the one hundred and fifty dollars with which to pay those scandalous bills of your husband.

MAR. Oh, mamma, how good of you!

MRS. G. Martin, shall you be at home this evening?

PROF. But, my dear Sophronia, now that you are at home, why should I —

MRS. G. (*interrupting*). You go so often without telling me where. (*They talk together, L.*)

MAR. (*in meanwhile has given her husband pocketbook and money*). Are you not glad now that you have confessed? That one hundred and fifty dollars will pay all those horrible bills. Then your conscience will be quite clear.

DR. N. Mariana, you are an angel. (*Embraces her.*)

MRS. G. Come, Mariana, I wish to speak with you. (*Exit with MARIANA, L.*)

DR. N. (*looking at bank-notes*). Well, if the devil doesn't take care of his own. (*Pockets money.*) Telling my wife my past pays better than my practice.

PROF. (*walks up and down stage; talks to himself*). I have a good mind to try my son-in-law. To be sure he never has any money. Well, I will do it. (*Offers NEWMAN cigar.*) Have a cigar, my dear boy?

DR. N. I don't care if I do. (*Aside.*) Everything is coming my way to-day. (*Takes cigar; they light up.*)

PROF. My dear Leopold, I have a favor to ask of you.

DR. N. Yes. What is it?

PROF. Could you help me out with a little money for a couple of months?

DR. N. Why, with the greatest pleasure.

PROF. You really mean it?

DR. N. (*feeling in his pocket*). Just name your sum.

PROF. I am afraid it will be asking too much.

DR. N. Pshaw! Out with it.

PROF. (*timidly*). One hundred and fifty dollars.

DR. N. One hundred and fifty dollars! Aha! that is a mere trifle. Here you are. (*Gives him money.*)

PROF. Leopold, you are too generous.

DR. N. One bill is just a little torn, but it will go.

PROF. (*surprised*). Torn? (*Aside; looks closely at bill.*) That's the very bill I gave my wife. He will never get that back again. (*Puts bill in pocket.*)

(*Enter SPARTAN SPOTTS, C.*)

SPOTTS. The gods be praised, Professor, that I have found you in at last.

PROF. (*horrified*). Spotts, what do you want here?

SPOTTS. I have a proposition of much weight to make to you.

PROF. But not here — if my wife should see you.

DR. N. Mrs. Goldwhinney is likely to come in at any moment.

SPOTTS. Nay, gentlemen, why should we be thus shrouded in mystery? The lady does not know me. If the worst comes, the Professor could dissemble a bit. I can assume the rôle of an old acquaintance. Are there not many strangers in town for the fire muster? And am I not one who has come to trip the light fantastic at the ball?

PROF. (*impatiently*). Well, what do you want?

SPOTTS. By the gods, Professor. Tullia in your play. I am at a loss how to cast it. I have no women left.

PROF. But what can we do in that case?

SPOTTS. I have talked the matter over with my wife, who can surmount any obstacle. Shakspeare himself could not have managed this dilemma better, with more skill than she has done. She suggests that if it pleases the Professor to transpose the part of the slave Tullia into the part Tullius, which will be a man slave, then, you see, we are out of the difficulty.

PROF. But it is impossible. I cannot make a male part out of Tullia. Don't you remember the monologue in the first act where Tullia says, "Oh, would that I had been born a man." Now, that speech cannot be given by a man.

SPOTTS. Ah! 'tis true. That thought had quite escaped me.

PROF. Well, then —

SPOTTS. Inasmuch as there is this strong objection to its being a man, all that there is left for us to do is to make a child of it.

PROF. A child, Mr. Spotts! Such a liberty with my play I will not permit.

SPOTTS. Not when I tell you my boy Cecil will make a hit in the part?

PROF. You really think it would be possible?

SPOTTS. There is no doubt of it. He is a youth of wonderful promise. If you could cut down the lines a little, it will be capital. I have brought the manuscript. By the way, Professor, there is a coffee spot on the cover; but it must have happened here. Our coffee leaves no spots.

PROF. Is it necessary to do this at once?

SPOTTS. By heaven, Professor, there is not a moment to lose. We have a rehearsal this evening.

PROF. Very well then, come with me. (*Exeunt, R.*)

SPOTTS. Doctor, I have a humble favor to ask of you. My wife has heard in the town all about your wonderful parrot. I thought that perhaps you would have the generosity to loan us the bird for the production of King Titus Tatius.

DR. N. But does the play call for a parrot?

SPOTTS. Nay, not a whit; but the second act is laid in a pine forest, and my wife thought that it would be a bit of realism if they brought a live parrot upon the stage and allowed it to sit upon the branch of a pine-tree. Then you see the audience would feel themselves transported to the forests of Rome.

DR. N. You are to make a spectacular performance of this?

SPOTTS. Yes; every attention will be given to detail. At present we are somewhat embarrassed for want of suitable costumes for the Sabine women; but fortunately my wife has again come to the rescue, and we have made arrangements with the local fire company to borrow their uniforms.

DR. N. (*laughing*). The Sabine women in red shirts! Ha, ha!

SPOTTS (*aside*). Forsooth, he maketh sport of me.

DR. N. All right, Spotts, the parrot is yours; but don't put a red shirt on it; it would clash with the green. Ha, ha!

SPOTTS. By Jupiter! but you are a merry jester. Ha, ha! (*Exit, L.; enter MRS. GOLDWHINNEY, C.*)

MRS. G. Leopold, I wish to have a serious talk with you. Mariana has told me all.

DR. N. The deuce she has.

MRS. G. I understand you have both agreed to bury the past.

DR. N. (*solemnly*). Yes; forever!

MRS. G. But I am not satisfied. I wish to know how you have reconciled the uncle of this unhappy woman?

DR. N. The uncle! (*Aside.*) The devil! (*Aloud.*) Oh, that's all right!

MRS. G. Have you seen him?

DR. N. Oh, yes; and everything is all right.

MRS. G. But you have not been to Washington?

DR. N. No; you see it was not necessary. He came here.

MRS. G. Here?

DR. N. Yes, he was in town for the ball — the Fireman's Ball.

MRS. G. And he was really reconciled?

DR. N. We are the best of friends.

MRS. G. (*taking LEOPOLD'S hand*). Oh, how grateful I am! Go and tell Mariana at once, for the poor child is nearly worried to death about it. We will never speak of this matter again, Leopold.

DR. N. No, you may depend upon me for that. (*Exit R.*)

MRS. G. (*sighs*). He may have sown his wild oats; but then his heart is in the right place.

(*Enter SPOTTS.*)

SPOTTS. Ah! the Professor's wife. (*Attempts to leave by centre door.*)

MRS. G. Excuse me, sir, whom do you wish to see? The Professor?

SPOTTS (*aside*). Trapped, by heaven! I will be bold and assume a front. Pardon me, Mrs. Goldwhinney —

MRS. G. You know me? Perhaps it is my husband you wish to see.

SPOTTS. Your husband? Not that I am aware of. I called to see Dr. Newman.

MRS. G. Excuse me; I will call him.

SPOTTS. Oh, don't trouble. We have already explained matters. Everything is quite satisfactory.

MRS. G. (*aside*). How embarrassed he appears. Excuse me, but you are a stranger here — are you not?

SPOTTS. Yes; I am from Washington.

MRS. G. (*crying out*). From Washington? Then you are —

SPOTTS. No, madam, really I am not. I came to town for the Fireman's Ball.

MRS. G. To the Fireman's Ball?

SPOTTS (*aside*). Would that the floor would open and swallow me. You will excuse me, madam, but I have an appointment. (*Attempts to exit, C.*)

MRS. G. (*stopping him*). Sir, you are endeavoring to hide from me the true reason for your presence in this house; but it is of no avail, for I know all.

SPOTTS. You know all! (*Aside.*) My time has come. I am a dead man!

MRS. G. And you shall not leave till all is made clear.

SPOTTS (*aside*). Merciful heavens! She will take away the play.

MRS. G. I know the sad fate of your niece.

SPOTTS. My niece! But I have no niece.

MRS. G. Because you have disowned her.

SPOTTS. Yes, I have disowned her. (*Aside.*) What the devil does she mean?

MRS. G. You have come here to demand satisfaction from my son-in-law.

SPOTTS (*aside*). She means the doctor — the plot thickens.

MRS. G. Ah, how you must have suffered when she entered a convent!

SPOTTS (*aside*). Evidently the doctor has been reciting fables, — I will assist him. Pardon me; if you will be so kind as not to mention my unhappy niece — 'tis a sad story and pains me much. But the young man has other sins to answer for.

MRS. G. Can it be possible?

SPOTTS. I would a tale unfold, whose slightest word would harrow up thy soul.

MRS. G. Oh, don't look like that!

SPOTTS. Your son-in-law — pardon me, madam, but my feelings got the better of me — became enamoured of a circus-rider named Florella. She was of poor but needy parents; like a serpent he twined himself about her heart, and then he cast her aside because she wore ear-laps in winter. Do you hear, ear-laps?

MRS. G. Dear me! my daughter told me nothing of this.

(*Enter DR. NEWMAN.*)

SPOTTS. Ah, he comes! (*Aside.*) I would that I were the other side of the door.

MRS. G. Leopold, you told me a few moments ago that you had had a satisfactory explanation with the girl's uncle.

DR. N. So I have.

MRS. G. (*with sarcasm*). Yes, that worthy man has informed me so himself.

DR. N. What! her uncle?

MRS. G. (*pointing to SPOTTS*). Yes, there he is.

DR. N. (*rushes up to SPOTTS; grasps his hands*). My dear, dear uncle, how can I thank you enough for coming here. Now, Mrs. Goldwhinney, what further proof can I give you of my sincerity in this matter?

MRS. G. Silence, sir! Do not try to deceive me any more. This worthy man has told me that which you have concealed. It has pleased him whom you have wronged so deeply to forgive you; but remember, hereafter I shall watch everything which you do. Beware! Remember the circus-rider. (*Exit c.*)

DR. N. "Circus-rider!" What in thunder does she mean? (*To SPOTTS.*) Look here, sir! If you have endeavored —

SPOTTS. Doctor, have I not succeeded?

DR. N. (*sharply*). What business have you meddling with my affairs? If you wish to indulge in any farce comedy go back to your barn-storming.

SPOTTS. "Barn-storming! Barn-storming!" Think you to cast a slur upon so worthy a profession? Who first produced Shakspeare's divine comedies? Barn-stormers! Who was Edwin Forrest? A barn-stormer! What made David Garrick's name burst forth like a meteor? Barn-storming! Hear how, I, a hum-

ble barn-stormer, pronounce upon your head the curse, like the noble Richelieu, — the curse of our profession. Mark where I stand — around my form I draw the awful circle of our foot-lights. Step but one step within the charmed circle, and at thy head — aye, though it were a cracked crown — I'd hurl the most awful curse of Spartan Spotts, a barn-stormer. (NEWMAN C., *laughing*; SPOTTS *in defiant attitude at L. C.*)

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE. — *The same.* PAULA seated in easy-chair reading paper.

PAULA. Ha, ha! That's not so bad.

(*Enter the PROFESSOR.*)

PAULA (*showing the paper*). Papa, here is an awfully good joke.

PROF. Ah, child! I cannot laugh. I am so anxious. (*Goes to window.*) There goes one man into the theatre, and there goes — no, he's going by. Ah, if the performance were only over! (*Looks at watch.*) In an hour and a half the play will begin.

PAULA. Oh, dear! I wish that I could go.

PROF. That is out of the question. You know that your mother —

PAULA. But you are going.

PROF. Why, of course. Leopold and I will go. I told your mother that we were going to a lecture. Do not betray us.

PAULA. How does Marcus play?

PROF. Mr. Harkins? Between you and me, my dear, he is the best of all.

PAULA. Oh, I am sure that he is. He has such a fine voice. Oh, dear, I shall cry if you do not take me

(*Enter ROSA.*)

ROSA (*mysteriously*). Professor! Professor!

PROF. What is it?

ROSA. The manager is here.

PROF. Good heavens! Paula, where is your mother?

PAULA. She is in there with Leopold and Mariana.

PROF. Look through the keyhole and see if they are coming out. (PAULA *looks through keyhole.*)

ROSA. He says that he must see you on important business. There is a gentleman with him. A Mr. Harkins.

PAULA (*turning*). Marcus?

PROF. Sh! (*To ROSA.*) Show the gentlemen in, but softly. Do you hear?

ROSA. Yes, sir. (*Exit.*)

PROF. And now, Paula, go to your mother and prevent her from coming here, that we may not be disturbed.

PAULA. But papa —

PROF. Go, go. (*Tip-toes to door, c.*)

PAULA. Oh, dear! It's mean to send me away. (*Lays a bunch of keys on the mantel-piece.*) But I will return soon. (*Exit as SPOTTS and HARKINS enter.*)

PROF. For heaven's sake, manager, what is it? Is the performance postponed?

SPOTTS (*dressed in long coat*). "Postponed!" Why should you think so? The house is sold. Even one of the society leaders has promised to be present. It will be magnificent.

PROF. Oh, if it were only over! I am so anxious.

SPOTTS. That is only natural. Your joy will be so much the greater when we have the great success behind us.

PROF. Yes; but it is a quarter before seven. You are in the first act. Will you be ready?

SPOTTS. Have no fear. Although at present I am in civilian's dress, in half an hour you will see me appear upon the stage as King Titus Tatius. I was at one time a lightning change artist.

PROF. But what do you want here?

SPOTTS. Well, Professor, it is about the part of the slave Tullia.

PROF. But I have rewritten it — adapted it for your boy.

SPOTTS. To be sure; but just at the last moment it occurred to my wife that the boy is needed to make a great noise of fighting behind the scenes.

PROF. What shall we do, then?

SPOTTS. We need not be wholly discouraged. My wife has suggested a way out of the difficulty. (*Counting on fingers.*) You see, Tullia cannot be a woman, because we cannot fill the part; we cannot have it a man, because you object; and, although my boy is a wonder, he cannot be on and off the stage at the same time. Therefore, there is nothing else to do but to turn the part of Tullia into a letter.

PROF. A letter!

SPOTTS. Yes; it can be brought in by a messenger. (*Thinks a moment.*) But we have no messenger. Ah! I have it. The letter must be found upon the ground in the forest.

PROF. No, no. It cannot be done.

SPOTTS. We have surmounted other obstacles, why not this? Please write a letter for me, and I promise you that everything will be O.K.

PROF. As you will. I am prepared for anything. (*Aside.*) I wish that that play was at the bottom of the sea. (*To SPOTTS.*) You shall have it in a moment, manager. To think that such a part should meet such a fate. (*Exit with SPOTTS.*)

(Enter ROSA; looks out of door, c., cautiously, then enters quickly.)

ROSA. Oh, sir, do please tell me what it is all about. I was listening at the keyhole; but lor, sir, I couldn't hear anything. Is it about our play?

JACK. Of course.

ROSA. Don't say that anything has happened. If you do I shall die.

JACK. How could anything happen under the management of so able a man as Spartan Spotts? Here are your tickets.

ROSA. Thank you, sir. Oh, writing a play makes one so anxious! Do you know, I tried the cards last night, and they came out bad. The seven of spades was always next to the Professor.

JACK. But, Rosa, cards are all nonsense.

ROSA. Well, perhaps they are; but Miss Paula is always trying them.

JACK. Did you give Miss Paula the flowers I brought?

ROSA. Yes, sir; and she was very angry.

JACK. Angry?

ROSA. Yes; she looked very black.

JACK. But what did she do with them?

ROSA. Oh, she put them on her dressing-case. (*Confidentially.*) And when they become wilted she wraps them in a paper, and puts them in her jewel-box.

JACK. Rosa, you've made me the happiest man on earth by telling me this. In her jewel-box.

(PAULA enters, c.)

PAULA. Rosa, have you — Mr. Harkins, are you here?

JACK. Yes, Miss Goldwhinney, I am waiting for Mr. Spotts.

PAULA (*embarrassed*). Oh, yes. Rosa, have you seen my keys? (*ROSA looks for them.*) No, no, they are not in here. I must have left them in the dining-room. If you do not find them there, look in the laundry.

JACK (*giving tip to ROSA; aside*). Make a very thorough and long search for them.

ROSA. Yes, sir. (*To PAULA.*) If I don't find the keys in the laundry, shall I look in the garret, miss?

PAULA. Yes, yes — only hurry —

ROSA (*aside*). He's going to propose. I'll look through the keyhole and see how he does it. (*Exit, c.*)

PAULA (*still searching*). It is strange where —

JACK. Can't I help you to find them, Miss Goldwhinney?

PAULA. Oh, no; Rosa can certainly find them. (*Sits, c.*) Won't you be seated? (*Both sit; a pause.*)

JACK. Will you do me a favor?

PAULA. I?

JACK. There is a pack of cards on the mantel. Can you tell fortunes with cards?

PAULA. Yes, indeed; I have done it a great many times.

JACK. I am not usually superstitious; but I am about to take a step in my life which will either be fortunate or unfortunate. At present my courage fails me; but if you could give me a light—

PAULA (*innocently*). I?

JACK. That is, with your cards.

PAULA. Well, if you really wish me to. (*Takes cards and lays them out on table, etc.*) You must think of something while I am fixing the cards.

JACK (*looking at PAULA*). I am thinking of something.

PAULA. Do you see this card? That is you.

JACK. The king of hearts. Ha, ha!

PAULA. Now, listen! 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. (*Counts cards.*) An old gentleman—

JACK. That must be the governor.

PAULA. He is angry; but not very.

JACK. Go on, you are doing nobly.

PAULA (*counting to seven*). An important letter.

JACK. The letter Leopold has written to appease him.

PAULA (*counting to seven*). A frivolous young man.

JACK. That is I.

PAULA (*counting*). A maiden in a fainting-fit.

JACK. Which doesn't mean much.

PAULA. A change is going on in the young man.

JACK. Yes, yes! Go on.

PAULA. The young lady stops—

JACK. Yes, yes, the young lady?

PAULA (*looking at cards, and jumping up*). Oh, it's all nonsense!

JACK. Ah, but Miss Goldwhinney, it cannot be; it has all come out so true this far. (*Counting to seven.*) Tell me, what about the young lady?

PAULA. No, I cannot. (*Starts to go.*)

JACK. Don't leave me in suspense, with my fate in the cards. (*PAULA exit.*) If I could only read them myself. (*Enter ROSA.*)

ROSA. How far have you got, Mr. Harkins?

JACK (*pulls ROSA to table*). You must help me! Look at that. (*Pointing to cards.*) There I am a frivolous young man; there is she, the young lady. Tell me, what does the eight of hearts mean?

ROSA. Don't you know that! Why it's the simplest thing in the world. The young lady loves the young man!

JACK. She loves me! She loves me! Oh, I am so happy! (*Embraces ROSA.*)

(*Enter SPOTTS, L.*)

SPOTTS. Tush, tush, man! What dost thou here?

JACK. Oh, Mr. Spotts, I am so happy! She loves me! Do you hear? (*Counting to seven.*) She loves me!

SPOTTS. Heavens, man! Are you going mad? The performance is in a half-hour. Come, pull yourself together! Come out and get a glass of seltzer water. Quick! It is seven now!

JACK. Right you are. (*Exeunt, JACK counting.*)

ROSA (*picking up cards*). Dear me! Seven o'clock, and I am not dressed for the theatre. (*Takes off apron.*) I'll get ready in a jiffy and skip out, and then, if the missus wants me, she can whistle. (*Exit whistling.*)

DR. N. (*entering L.; looks back talking*). I'll be back in a moment, Mrs. Goldwhinney. (*Closes door.*) Gad! that was a narrow escape. A moment more and she would have captured me. (*Goes to door and calls.*) Professor! Professor! Come out quickly!

PROF. (*entering from D. R.*). What's the trouble?

DR. N. Mariana will not hear of my going out this eve. We are to have a little family reconciliation. Your wife insists that we shall all remain at home. Mariana and Mrs. Goldwhinney are in a very sentimental mood at present.

PROF. Humbug! (*Looking out of window.*) Look, Leopold, the theatre is all lighted; the play will begin soon. (*PAULA enters from C.*)

DR. N. What a crowd going in.

PROF. And we have to remain here, while I have the tickets in my hand.

DR. N. Well, what can we do?

PAULA (*coming forward*). I will tell you.

BOTH. You?

PAULA. Yes; on one condition, I will help you to get out. That is, I must go too.

PROF. But how can you manage it?

PAULA. Very simply. When we are all seated in here, you must begin to find fault with me, whereupon I will answer you very impertinently, and then you must send me to my room. Once there, I will run down the back stairs and meet you at the theatre.

PROF. Yes; but where do we come in?

DR. N. Where do we go out? I should say.

PAULA (*to DR. NEWMAN*). When I leave the room you must take my part; and then you, papa, must get very angry, have a heated discussion, and both leave the house in anger.

DR. N. Good idea!

PROF. I don't believe it will work.

(*Enter MARIANA and MRS. GOLDWHINNEY, L. U. E.*)

MRS. G. Martin, has Leopold told you all?

PROF. Alas, yes!

MRS. G. But you will forgive him, won't you, as Mariana and I have done? But remember, Leopold, from now on, there are to be no more secrets.

DR. N. None, I promise you.

MRS. G. Martin, you will keep no more secrets from me, will you, dear? (*Embraces him.*)

PROF. Certainly not, my dear. (*Aside.*) Only one more.

MRS. G. This is a very happy evening for us all, children.

DR. N. (*sighing*). Ah, yes!

PROF. Dear Sophronia. (*Looking at watch.*) I find that Leopold and I are to meet the missionary in charge of the fresh-air fund for the heathen this evening.

MRS. G. You can see him just as well in the morning. We cannot have our family reunion disturbed.

PAULA (*who has been looking out of window*). Oh, dear! it will be so stupid sitting here all the evening.

MRS. G. Paula!

DR. N. (*aside to PROFESSOR*). Now's your chance.

PROF. Paula, what do you mean?

DR. N. (*aside to PROFESSOR*). Go on, go on.

PROF. Paula, I am astonished at such a remark from you.

PAULA (*crying*). I can't seem to say anything to-day to please you. I remarked this morning that I had heard that the Indians always burn their mother-in-laws at the stake when they are to be married. You said, nonsense. Now, I wish you to understand that I am no longer a child to be spoken to in that way.

PROF. Paula, go to your room!

PAULA. No, sir; I shall not.

MRS. G. Why, Paula, child!

PROF. You will not go? Start this minute, and don't show yourself here again to-night; and don't any of you go near her.

MRS. G. Martin!

PROF. (*sternly*). Go! (*Pointing to door.*)

PAULA (*crying as she goes*). Oh, to be treated so by my own father!

MAR. Poor Paula!

PROF. (*to MARIANA*). You dare to take her part! Not another word!

DR. N. (*assuming anger; to PROFESSOR*). Professor, I have heard enough! How you may treat Paula is none of my business; but when you undertake to blame my wife, I must interfere.

PROF. Sir, you have the impudence, the presumption —

MRS. G. (*trying to pacify him*). But, Martin, dear —

PROF. And you also; so you are all in this plot against me. And on this night, too, when we were all so happily reconciled. Do you wish to drive me out of the house? Very well, you shall have your wish — I go. (*Exit quickly, c.*)

MRS. G. Well, I never!

DR. N. You don't suppose he will do anything desperate while he is so excited. We can't tell what might happen to him.

MRS. G. Run after him, Leopold.

DR. N. All right; here goes! (*Exit, c.*)

MRS. G. Oh, these men! these men!

MAR. Well, it's all papa's fault.

MRS. G. But Leopold should not have interfered.

MAR. But Leopold acted for the best. He is always so noble and kind.

MRS. G. How about the circus-rider and the unpaid bills?

MAR. We agreed not to speak of them again.

MRS. G. Well, let it pass. I am so disturbed. (*Takes up copy of "Life."*) Mariana, read that!

MAR. (*reading*). "When Mr. — wishes to go out for a lark without his wife, he makes this plan with his nephew. Upon a given signal the nephew declares that the Indians burn their mothers-in-law upon the day of their wedding" —

MRS. G. How horrible!

MAR. (*continuing*). "Whereupon a lively discussion ensues between Mr. — and his nephew, and the former becomes so angry that he leaves the house."

MRS. G. Mariana, we have been caught by this very scheme!

MAR. It's a shameful trick they have played upon us. The idea of papa talking to Pauline as he did. We must let the poor child out.

MRS. G. Yes; at once. (*Goes to door L., and calls.*) Come out, Paula, my dear. (*A pause.*)

MAR. (*enters R., and comes out hurriedly*). She is not there!

MRS. G. Are you sure?

MAR. Yes; and her hat and coat are gone, and the back door is open.

MRS. G. Heavens! Can she have gone out?

MAR. Of course she has. Don't you see that Paula is in the plot too?

MRS. G. It was she that mentioned the Indians burning their mothers-in-law.

MAR. It was not ten minutes ago that Leopold promised me in this very room that he would not deceive me again.

MRS. G. Yes; it was in this very room that my husband promised me the same thing.

(*Bell heard ringing.*)

MAR. Some one is ringing; perhaps they have returned.

MRS. G. Well, we will give them a warm reception. (*Bell rings again.*) Why does not Rosa answer the bell?

MAR. (*calling from C.*). Rosa! Rosa! (*A pause.*) Well, she has gone too. (*Bell rings again.*)

MRS. G. But some one must go to the door.

MAR. I will. (*Exit, C.*)

MRS. G. I never thought I should live to see such goings on.

(*Enter MARIANA followed by MR. HARKINS.*)

MAR. Mamma, here is a gentleman to see papa.

MRS. G. (*stiffly*). I am very sorry that my husband is not at home.

MR. H. I am Mr. Charles Harkins from —

MRS. G. I am very glad to hear it.

MR. H. Your husband, no doubt, has told you considerable about me.

MRS. G. No; my husband tells me nothing.

MR. H. (*aside*). What a peculiar woman. If your husband is not here, may I see Dr. Newman?

MAR. My husband! He is not at home. If you are ill his office hours are from five to six. It is now eight.

MR. H. (*aside*). Dear me! They seem a bit put out. (*Aloud.*) If you will excuse me, ladies, I will hunt up the gentlemen. Where shall I be likely to find them?

MRS. G. We do not know.

MR. H. (*aside*). Humph! Brilliant family! Then, if I shall not disturb you, I will wait for them here.

MAR. Is there anything we can do?

MR. H. You see, I called in regard to that rascally son of mine, John, of whom, of course, you have heard the Professor speak.

MRS. G. Not a word!

MR. H. (*to MARIANA*). But you, Mrs. Newman, have certainly heard the story.

MAR. I am sorry, but I have not.

MR. H. But your husband has written me an eight-page letter about the rascal, asking for my forgiveness.

MAR. (*looking out of window without listening to MR. HARKINS*). Indeed!

MR. H. Do you know that boy has the worst shines I ever heard of? Why, only last year in New York he formed an attachment for a dancer.

MRS. G. (*suddenly interested*). What did you say?

MR. H. Of course he got in debt, and finally ran off. To-day, I hear that he is acting here in the theatre.

MAR. That is very strange — a dancer in New York.

MR. H. Strange! I should say that it was. Look, here is his pocketbook. Here are the proofs of his escapade. (*Takes out of pocketbook and exhibits in succession.*) Here is her picture, a lock of hair, the ring; and here are the bills which I paid day before yesterday, amounting to one hundred and fifty dollars.

MAR. Oh, this is too much! (*Sinks into chair.*)

MR. H. Think of me — his father.

MAR. He has told me the past of another.

MR. H. (*surprised*). Who has? Who —

MRS. G. (*pointing to picture*). But I have spoken with the uncle of the poor girl.

MR. H. Uncle! She never had an uncle. (*Putting pocketbook with articles in pocket.*)

MRS. G. So that was another lie!

MAR. Heavens, the same pocketbook!

MRS. G. Sir, where did you get that?

MR. H. I received it by mail from Dr. Newman.

MRS. G. { Can it be possible?

MAR. { Merciful heavens!

MR. H. (*aside*). I believe they are going mad. (*Taking hat and stick.*) Pardon me, ladies; had I known the story of my son would have moved you so much I should not have mentioned it. (*Going to C.*)

MRS. G. Sir, what do you suppose we care about your son?

MAR. (*crying*). It is my Leopold.

MR. H. (*aside*). "My Leopold!" I think I had better get out in the air. They're about the greatest pair of fools I've met for some time. (*Exit C.*)

MAR. (*jumping up*). Mamma, I shall at once procure a divorce from Leopold.

MRS. G. Quite right, my child, quite right.

MAR. Hark! He is coming up the stairs now.

MRS. G. (*severely*). And he has returned for the last time.

(*Enter PAULA, C., weeping; runs up to MARIANA.*)

MAR. Paula, dear, what is the matter? Where have you been?

MRS. G. Tell us what has happened.

PAULA. Leave me alone! Leave me alone!

MAR. Mamma, she is trembling violently.

MRS. G. { Do speak!

MAR. { What is the matter?

PAULA. Oh, it was awful — awful!

MRS. G. Mercy, the child must be ill!

(*ROSA enters R. C., weeping.*)

ROSA. Oh, dear! oh, dear! It is horrible! horrible! (*Sits in C. R., and holds her head in her hands, moaning.*)

MRS. G. You too? What is horrible?

ROSA. Oh, I cannot tell. Oh, dear! oh, dear!

MAR. Paula, what is the matter? Come, I will take you to your room. (*Exit with MARIANA.*)

PAULA (*as she goes out*). Poor papa! Oh, dear, dear!

MRS. G. Rosa, go to the kitchen at once, and make some tea.

ROSA (*going L., sobbing*). Oh, the poor Professor! the poor Professor! (*Exit.*)

MRS. G. I will get the Jamaica Ginger. (*Exit R.*)

(*Enter PROFESSOR and DR. NEWMAN. DR. NEWMAN supports PROFESSOR, who is very much collapsed. DR. NEWMAN looking in door, C.*)

DR. N. Good, there is no one here. Come on, Professor, the coast is clear.

PROF. Leopold, I can stand up no longer; my knees are giving way. Ah! (*Sinks in chair.*) Ah, but it was frightful! (*Covers face with hands.*)

DR. N. There, there! Calm yourself. It is not so bad, after all. The audience only hissed a little after the first act.

PROF. Hissed a little! You are very kind to put it so mildly. Why, they almost cursed the play.

DR. N. But Prof—

PROF. (*excited*). Why, the people in the row back of me hissed so loudly that my ears are ringing now.

DR. N. For heaven's sake, don't speak so loudly, there is some one coming.

MAR. (*entering from L.*). Mamma, where are — (*Sees NEW-MAN.*) So, sir!

DR. N. (*assuming an off-hand manner*). Why, there you are, my pet! What are you looking for?

MAR. (*coldly*). Sir, I am looking for my mother. (*Sweeps out of door, C.*)

DR. N. Oh! She is looking for her mother. Professor, did you hear that? We are in for it.

PROF. Sh! Here comes my wife!

MRS. G. (*enters R., with bottle*). I thought I should never find the ginger. (*Sees the men.*) So you have returned?

PROF. (*attempting to appear pleased*). Ah, my darling! What are you doing with the ginger?

MRS. G. (*sternly*). I am taking it to my daughter. We shall meet again later. (*Exit, L.*)

PROF. Leopold, I believe they know all. We are lost!

DR. N. Cheer up. Who knows but what the play went better after we left? It may have been a great success.

PROF. Do you think it possible?

DR. N. Some of the best lines are in the second act. The ending of it, too, ought to have caught the audience. Come, let's go back; you may be called before the curtain. (*Attempts to lead the PROFESSOR off, C.*)

(*Enter SPOTTS hurriedly, C.*)

SPOTTS. Professor, Professor!

PROF. Speak man! What has happened?

DR. N. Anything wrong?

SPOTTS. It is all over! All over!

PROF. What do you mean?

DR. N. Explain yourself!

SPOTTS (*walking up and down stage while speaking*). To think I should have lived to see this end of my ambition. Ah! gentlemen, I never have experienced anything like it.

PROF. Why the devil don't you speak?

DR. N. For heaven's sake don't keep us in suspense.

SPOTTS. What has happened? I, Spartan Spurgius Spotts, was driven from the stage.

PROF. Heavens! Was it as bad as that?

SPOTTS. We had to stop playing in the middle of the second act. Such hissing and groaning I have never heard. The people jumped up on their seats and cried, "Stop the play," "Rotten," and other such flings which I cannot now recall. Worst of all, they had the nerve to ask that their money be returned.

PROF. Horrible!

SPOTTS. But we went on till the end of the second act. The audience was even becoming enthusiastic. I, as King Titus Tatius, stood casting a defiant look upon the Roman embassy. My wife, as Virginia, had just closed her great speech, "By the anger of the gods, King Romulus, answer me. What wish you of me? Speak!" when that damned parrot of yours cried out, "Kiss me birdie!" Then the audience began to throw things, cabbages, eggs, everything. My eldest daughter had the presence of mind to ring the curtain down. In my grief and mortification I left the theatre.

PROF. Well, I am indeed punished for my folly.

DR. N. Sh! Here comes your wife, Professor.

PROF. (to SPOTTS). Not a word before her.

SPOTTS. Not on my life.

DR. N. Come, pull yourself together, Professor.

(Enter MRS. GOLDWHINNEY, L.)

MRS. G. (to SPOTTS). So you have returned, sir? What do you mean by passing yourself off for some one else?

DR. N. But, Mrs. Goldwhinney—

MRS. G. Silence, sir. I demand the truth. Now, sir, who are you? And what do you wish in this house?

SPOTTS. My dear madam, that is easily explained. I—

PROF. (*pulling his sleeve*). Shut up!

DR. N. Why, don't you know who he is? He is the missionary in charge of the fresh-air fund for the heathen.

PROF. Certainly, my dear, you must have heard of him.

(Enter ROSA, C.)

ROSA. Madam, here is the tea.

DR. N. (*taking tea*). Won't you have a cup of tea?

SPOTTS (*assuming clerical air*). Oh, thank you so much, it will be so refreshing.

PROF. Come, you must make yourself at home. (*Takes off hat, and begins to help SPOTTS with coat.*) Come, off with your coat.

SPOTTS. Well, if you insist. (*Taking off coat appears in costume of King Titus Tatius.*)

MRS. G. Heavens! What is that? (*Covers face with handkerchief.*)

(DR. NEWMAN and PROFESSOR try to cover SPOTTS up.)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE. — *Same as in first act. Portières drawn before alcove. PROFESSOR seated at writing-table; wears same costume as worn in last act; his cravat is untied and hair disordered; is entirely exhausted. Lays aside pen as curtain is raised.*

PROF. Well, if this letter will only bring me a leave of absence, I will take myself away somewhere — anywhere. (*Some one knocks.*) I wonder if that is my wife. (*Speaks at door, c.*) Is that you, Sophronia?

ROSA (*speaks*). It is only me, sir.

PROF. (*unlocks door; ROSA enters*). What do you want?

ROSA (*has tray with tea-kettle, bread, etc.*). Here is your breakfast, sir. (*Places tray upon table.*)

PROF. Thank you; I do not care for any breakfast.

ROSA. Please eat something, Professor. You will be sick if you don't. Look at yourself in the glass and see how pale you are.

SPOTTS (*putting head out of door*). May I have a cup of tea?

ROSA (*frightened*). Heavens! What is it?

SPOTTS (*comes down front; wears coat and trousers belonging to PROFESSOR*). Fear not, 'tis what remains of Spartan Spotts.

ROSA. What are you doing here?

SPOTTS. I passed the night upon the couch; the Professor was kind enough to loan me a part of his wardrobe. I did not dare to face my wife after last night's performance.

ROSA. Why, Professor, you have your dress coat still on. Didn't you go to bed?

PROF. No; I spent the night in that easy-chair.

ROSA. Goodness gracious! the idea of such a thing. And you won't have any breakfast?

PROF. No; I couldn't eat anything.

SPOTTS. But I can. I need something to fortify me before meeting my wife. (*Pours water from the tea-kettle; eats and drinks as though famished.*)

PROF. (*aside*). I don't dare to think of my wife. (*To ROSA.*) Did Mrs. Goldwhinney give you any message?

ROSA. No, sir. Madam is so angry. Last night when you and the doctor were out, she just went for us — first for Miss Paula, then for me. She treated me just as if I had written the play. It isn't my fault because the play is so bad. When you read it to me, I must say that I had my fears, Professor. There was a little too much sadness in it, especially at the end when every one is killed off.

SPOTTS. That is because you do not understand dramatic situations. The more people cry at the theatre, the better they like it. If that blamed parrot had not interrupted, everything would have been sublime. Only wait until we repeat it.

PROF. Heavens, man! Don't attempt to give it again. I will burn the manuscript. I hope that no one in town will ever know that I was the author.

SPOTTS. The secret shall be buried with me.

PROF. I intend to leave town at once, until this terrible fiasco becomes a thing of the past.

SPOTTS. But, Professor —

PROF. Nothing can change my decision. Rosa, bring down my valise from the attic. (*Exit, R.*)

ROSA (*wiping eyes*). He has always been such a kind master.

SPOTTS (*rising from table with cup and saucer in hand*). I don't know why it is, Professor, but the more I drink of this stuff, the more I may. There is nothing satisfying about it.

(*Enter JACK HARKINS, C.*)

JACK. At last I have found you. I have looked everywhere for you. I have some great news.

SPOTTS. If it is anything thrilling, break it to me gently. (*Pours glass of brandy from decanter on table.*) I am ready.

JACK. Yesterday evening — (*Discovers that ROSA is listening; to ROSA.*) Will you please bring me a glass of water? (*ROSA exit, C.*) Yesterday evening my father called upon me at my hotel, and we came to a complete understanding and reconciliation. I start for home to-day.

SPOTTS. Ah! I see; you wish a vacation.

JACK. No, Mr. Spotts, you do not quite understand. It is not a vacation. I shall say farewell to the stage forever.

SPOTTS. What are you thinking of? Man! how can I spare you? You are as necessary to me as my daily bread. I will not speak of your talent — but your society wardrobe. I have been manager for twenty-five years, but you are the only lover I ever had who possessed a dress suit. How can we give a society play if we have no one with a frock coat or a "tuxedo"?

JACK. This is very kind of you, manager, but don't let that trouble you for a moment, for I shall bequeath to you my entire wardrobe.

SPOTTS. You will? I am overwhelmed with gratitude.

JACK. But that is not all.

SPOTTS. Ah, you have a mackintosh?

JACK. My father is a large shareholder in a new theatre in New York. If you will release me from my contract, he will procure for you the position of manager.

SPOTTS. Manager of a theatre in New York! Jove, the dream of my life realized! You are free. *Allez!* Manager in New York! To remain in one city more than two nights! My cup of happiness is full to overflowing. (*Takes drink from decanter.*)

JACK. Then it is a bargain?

SPOTTS. Yes; but come and break the news to my wife.

JACK. If you will excuse me, I will go later. I wish to pay my respects here first.

SPOTTS. The Professor is in there. (*Points L.*)

JACK. Thank you. (*About to knock. PAULA says outside, "Bring it here, Rosa."*)

JACK. Ah, her voice.

(*Enter PAULA followed by ROSA, who carries small basket trunk.*)

PAULA. You may leave the trunk here, and I will attend to it directly. (*ROSA places trunk on floor, R.*) Good-morning, gentlemen. Have you seen papa?

SPOTTS. The Professor is in his room.

PAULA. You are waiting to see him? I will call him.

JACK (*quickly*). Do not call him, Miss Goldwhinney, I beg of you.

PAULA. Why?

JACK. Just one moment, please. That is—I mean—perhaps you might disturb him.

SPOTTS. Oh, no, you won't. He is only packing his bag. I will call him. (*Starts to knock at door; PAULA and JACK take him R. and L., and pull him back from door.*)

PAULA. Oh, never mind.

JACK. Don't trouble yourself.

SPOTTS (*taking in situation; aside*). Ha, ha! I smell a rat. (*Aloud.*) Well, now that you mention it, methinks it would not be well to call him. (*Aside.*) Spotts, my boy, you are playing gooseberry.

JACK (*embarrassed*). I have something to tell you, Miss Goldwhinney.

PAULA (*embarrassed*). Oh, have you, really?

JACK (*looks at SPOTTS; with meaning*). Yes; but for your ears alone.

PAULA (*understands; to SPOTTS*). Your wife must be quite anxious to see you.

JACK. Yes, yes; you ought to go at once.

SPOTTS. Ah, I see! That noble maxim, "Two is company and three is a regiment." I go, and leave with you my blessing. I go—to try on your wardrobe. (*Exit.*)

JACK (*starts toward PAULA*). My dear—

(*Enter SPOTTS quickly.*)

SPOTTS. I beg pardon, but did you intend to include the green waistcoat with the embroidered yellow chrysanthemum?

JACK. Everything.

SPOTTS. Thank you. (*Exit.*)

JACK. My dear Miss Goldwhinney—(*Embarrassed.*) What train do you take? (*Both look at time-table. Enter SPOTTS.*)

SPOTTS. I beg pardon. What size collar do you wear?

JACK (*who has not heard him, points to time-table*). 2.40.

SPOTTS. "2.40!" Jupiter! that must be a horse collar. (*Exit.*)

JACK. I wished to say to you, my dear Miss Goldwhinney — (*Attempts to take her hand.*)

PAULA (*draws away from him*). Oh, I must pack my trunk. (*Starts to lift basket trunk.*)

JACK. Do let me help you.

PAULA. I am afraid it will give you too much trouble.

JACK. Oh, I had to do this sort of thing twice a day while I was with Spotts. (*Both stand holding trunk between them.*)

PAULA. This is to be filled with mamma's treasures.

JACK (*very sweetly; with meaning, looking at trunk and then at PAULA*). I hardly think that it is large enough to hold you. (*Both exeunt with trunk, laughing.*)

(*Enter PROFESSOR, L., in shirt-sleeves and with bag partially packed, which he places on table.*)

PROF. "So live, that when thy summons comes to join the innumerable caravan, go, not as the quarry slave" — Well, I can appreciate the quarry slave's feelings this morning. Let me see — I have forgotten my book. (*Exit.*)

MAR. (*looking in at C. door*). There is no one here, mamma.

(*MRS. GOLDWHINNEY enters.*)

MRS. G. It would not be agreeable to meet certain people this morning.

MAR. (*appeasingly*). But, mamma —

MRS. G. (*coldly*). I have given you the keys to all the rooms; keep them until I return. Should I not return, you may make any changes you please. I shall only take away my picture. (*Takes large picture from wall.*) It belongs here no longer.

MAR. Sh! Papa is in his room.

MRS. G. (*taking no notice*). Give the picture to Rosa, and tell her to put it in the attic — with the face toward the wall.

(*PROFESSOR enters as MRS. GOLDWHINNEY speaks.*)

PROF. But, Sophronia —

MRS. G. (*turns her back upon PROFESSOR*). Mariana, you heard what I said? With the face toward the wall.

PROF. Sophronia, you are going away?

MRS. G. I have already told you that my determination is unalterable. Paula and I leave on the 2.40 train for Northampton. There, at least, I shall not be deceived.

MAR. Oh, mamma, do not be too hard! I have forgiven Leopold everything. (*MRS. GOLDWHINNEY angry.*) I see that I have been partly to blame.

MRS. G. Humbug! Your husband's youth may excuse him. This, I will say for him, he has not fallen so low as to have secrets with servants.

PROF. But, Sophronia, I only wished to surprise you.

MRS. G. Oh, a surprise, indeed! You have disgraced yourself before the whole town. That, I shall never forgive.

PROF. Well, it is no use to argue with a woman. (*Takes books from book-case, puts them in bag.*)

MRS. G. Come, Mariana, we must pack this basket. (*Business of packing trunk.*)

(*Enter CHARLES HARKINS.*)

MR. H. My dear friend, you see that I have returned.

PROF. Great heavens! (*Pretends to be very busy packing.*)

MR. H. (*looks at watch*). My train leaves in an hour. If we make haste, we can discuss everything.

MRS. G. (*aside*). What does he want here? (*Continues packing. Aloud.*) But, sir, we are very busy here.

MR. H. So I see. Packing, eh? Don't let me disturb you. It will give me a great deal of pleasure to assist you. (*Takes vase from mantel, wraps it in paper, and throws it in basket.*)

PROF. (*impatiently*). May I ask, sir, for what are we indebted for your presence here?

MR. H. Ha, ha! Why am I here? Ladies, do you hear that? Why, Professor, you know as well as I do that I have called in regard to my son.

PROF. Oh, you mean that rascal Jack.

MR. H. "Rascal Jack!" What do you mean, sir? I wish you to understand that there isn't a finer man in the world than Jack. (*Takes sugar-bowl from tea-tray, wraps it in paper, and throws it in basket.*) But I will say, confidentially, that love has changed him. That is possible, is it not, Professor?

PROF. (*impatiently*). It is possible.

MR. H. You will be more than proud of him, and you also, Mrs. Goldwhinney. When he is married and settled down, he will make one of the best husbands in the world. (*Puts sofa-pillow in PROFESSOR'S bag.*)

PROF. (*throwing pillow out*). What are you doing with that?

MR. H. Oh, pardon me! You do not wish to take that? As to financial matters, you can make your mind quite easy. I shall take him into partnership, and upon my death he will be my sole heir.

PROF. But this does not interest us at all.

MR. H. (*shaking PROFESSOR'S hand*). Unselfish man! But my son does not know all this. He is to marry the girl without a penny.

MRS. G. I am sure that is very good of him.

MR. H. Ah, my good friends, this will be a happy marriage. Mrs. Goldwhinney, may I have the pleasure of the first waltz at the wedding?

MRS. G. A waltz! (*Aside.*) What does the man mean?

MR. H. And you, Professor, shall make a speech.

PROF. Speech! (*Aside.*) The man is stark, staring mad.

MR. H. And now, let us keep the children in suspense no longer. Where is the happy pair?

(*Enter JACK and PAULA, hand in hand, from L.*)

JACK. Here we are, governor.

PROF. } What?

MRS. G. }

MR. H. (*taking JACK and PAULA by the hands*). Now, children, I am indeed happy.

(*DR. NEWMAN rushes on, C.*)

DR. N. Professor, I have great news.

PROF. Out with it.

DR. N. What do you think? Everybody in town is talking about "King Titus Tatius." It must have been a great success after all.

PROF. Can it be possible?

MR. H. You are speaking of the play which was given at the theatre last night?

PROF. Yes; do you know anything about it?

MR. H. Yes; I was there and saw it.

PROF. } You!

DR. N. }

PROF. How did it go?

MR. H. A great success. It was a remarkable piece. I have seldom seen better.

MRS. G. (*embracing PROFESSOR*). My dear Martin.

DR. N. (*to PROFESSOR*). Do you hear? A great success.

PROF. But I hear that in the middle of the second act they had to ring down the curtain.

MR. H. Yes; so I heard. You see, I came late. Possibly there was some hitch in the performance.

DR. N. (*quickly*). Yes, the company struck; but the management soon arranged everything, and the play went on.

PROF. And the audience seemed pleased?

MR. H. Tremendously.

DR. N. Professor, I congratulate you.

MRS. G. Martin, that atones for everything.

PROF. (*embraces MRS. GOLDWHINNEY hastily*). Sophronia!

MRS. G. But you won't write any more plays, will you, Martin?

PROF. No; I swear it. One in a lifetime is enough.

(*Enter SPOTTS, C.*)

SPOTTS. Professor! Professor! Do you not hear the shouting from the house-tops? A phenomenal success!

MRS. G. (*shakes SPOTTS by the hand*). For this news I pardon everything.

SPOTTS. Ah, but the success of the evening was due to my wife. Observing that the play was not pleasing the fickle public, she substituted for the last two acts another.

ALL. What was it?

SPOTTS. "The Queen of the Amazons." Professor, remembering that I promised you, should the play not be a success, a loophole of escape, I here return you the manuscript.

PROF. (*tearing manuscript*). In the language of Marcus, Scene 7, Act IV., "Thus do I tear thee limb from limb, King Titus Tatius." (*All applaud.*)

(*Tableau ; PROFESSOR in c., tearing manuscript ; SPOTTS at right of him, looking on approvingly ; MR. HARKINS and MRS. GOLDWHINNEY, L. ; DR. NEWMAN and MARIANA, R. ; JACK and PAULA at back, c. Quick curtain.*)

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